"To promote understanding and appreciation of the religious and spiritual values which abide in the processes and relationships of agriculture and rural life; to define their significance and relate them to the Christian enterprise at home and abroad."

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THE RURAL FAMILY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO ORGANIZED RELIGION*

By O. E. Baker**

We are in the midst of a revolution, in my opinion more profound in its implications than the Protestant Reformation or the French Revolution. Those revolutions did not affect deeply the institution of the family, whereas the revolution in progress is affecting the family profoundly. And because it is affecting the family, it is threatening the progress, perhaps even the survival, of the people of western European stocks, and the occidental civilization they have developed. In order to comprehend better the magnitude of this revolution, may we pause a moment while I sketch in bold strokes a picture of the past.

The Rural Civilization of a Century Ago

I shall never forget my amazement many years ago on my first visit to New England at the large, beautiful farm houses and barns. I was born and reared in the eastern Corn Belt where the land is fertile and level and the farms are fairly large. I had been told that New England was a region of little, stony, hillside farms; and what I was told is largely true. Yet in New England I saw better farm houses and bigger barns, always painted, than I had ever seen in the Corn Belt. Even today the most valuable farm houses in the United States are in New England, portions of New York and New Jersey, and in southeastern Pennsylvania. Many of these farm buildings were erected 100 to 200 years ago when mineral fertilizers were unknown, the cows gave only 2,000 pounds of milk a year, as compared with 6,000 pounds today, the ignorance of insect pests and of plant and animal diseases and how to control them was abysmal, and the markets for farm products were small and the prices low. Yet there are the houses, models of good architectural taste; there are the beautiful churches on the hilltops and in the valleys--in my opinion the most graceful and substantial in the Nation; there are the many schools and universities, mostly established and paid for in part by farm people--Harvard, Yale, Brown and Dartmouth, Amherst and Williams, Bowdoin and Wesleyan, not to mention several more recently established State universities and many famous women's colleges and schools of music and art.

There are practically no minerals in New England, except marble and granite, almost no coal or iron; but there were many small water powers and splendid pine forests. These permitted the early development of manufacturing and of a commerce that spread throughout the world. But back of these developments was a thrift and frugality, an integrity of the family, a village community, a love of education, and a religious faith, that provided the firm foundation out of which New England culture was built. It was a culture in the anthropological meaning of the word, a complex of ideals and institutions that produced one of the finest civilizations the world has ever known. As the numerous sons and daughters of

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New England moved West, they carried their village form of political organization and their love of education with them, peopling and dotting with schools, and colleges, and churches, "up-state" New York, northern Ohio, Michigan, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, parts of Minnesota and Iowa, much of Kansas and Nebraska, Utah, Oregon, and California.

In Pennsylvania another culture developed similar in many respects to the New England culture, but differing in other respects. Both the Palatinate Germans and the Quakers, like the New Englanders, brought with them from Europe strong religious faith, with educational and social institutions founded on it; while the religious traditions of the Scotch-Irish were scarcely less vigorous. There was the same thrift and frugality as in New England, much the same zeal for education, especially among the Quakers, the same respect for law and custom. But the village form of political and social organization was weaker than in New England; the community was, in general, less important, and the family, perhaps, more important, especially among the German sects. Not only are the largest barns and the most substantial farm houses in the United States found in southeastern Pennsylvania, where the land was of only fair quality originally, but also here and in New England, New York, New Jersey, Utah, and California a larger portion of the houses have water piped into the house and electric light than in most other States of the Nation.

In the valleys of southeastern Pennsylvania the birth rate was so high one to two centuries ago that most youth migrated west and south. These fecund people, with their laissez-faire economic philosophy, their democratic political and social system, their courage and ambition and frugality, and fortified by the consolations of a simple but vigorous religion, swept down the valleys of the Southern Appalachians as far as Georgia, and spread over onto the Piedmont to the east before the aristocratic plantation-owning people of the Atlantic Coast, with their slaves and indentured servants, crossed even the narrow coastal plain.

But the flow out of the mountain valleys westwardly into the Mississippi basin was much greater. The southern two-thirds of Ohio, of Indiana and of Illinois was occupied mostly by the descendants of the Scotch-Irish, the Germans, and the Quakers of Pennsylvania, with some intermixture of Virginians, also practically all of Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas, and much of southern Iowa, Northern Louisiana, and eastern Texas. It has been stated that the Scotch-Irish became the politicians and manned the professions, while the Germans worked on their farms and accumulated wealth. Both contributed much to the settlement of the South and central West and to the preservation of the spirit of freedom and the family farm.

Let us now turn southward to Virginia east of the mountains. Here was another outstanding culture, in large part an aristocratic culture based on ownership of estates and to some extent on slave labor, as contrasted with the yeomanry of New England and Pennsylvania, yet what magnificant contributions these people also made to American history. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe--all were residents of Virginia and farmers--part-time farmers, to use a modern phrase. Aided by farmers, for the most part, from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, they produced the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, maintained the democratic doctrine, and promoted the spirit of freedom, courage, and power that accomplished the agricultural conquest of a continent in the brief span of a century.

Several of the beautiful farm houses of Virginia are of Jefferson's design.

He first worked out mathematically the correct shape for the mold-board of the plow, started one of the first experiment stations on his farm, and founded the first State university. We need to revive his philosophy and his faith in the rural people.

In South Carolina another center of culture had developed--aristocratic, like that of Virginia, partly Huguenot, partly English, based on slavery and cotton and indigo and rice; and in Louisiana still another culture had grown up, partly French, yet reminiscent of the tropics. I shall never forget a delightful ride several years ago along the Bayou Teche--the lovely mansions, some of them falling into decay, the Catholic churches, the pleasant people, and the peace of a rich countryside.

The Decline of the Rural Cultures

One hundred years ago these cultures were developing in America, similar yet distinct, manifesting in many beautiful homes an appreciation of art, revealing in books, notably the Bible, a discriminating literary taste, characterized by the love of music, having a common Christian faith and code of morals, and devoted for the most part to the democratic ideals of the family farm and universal education. Wealth was meagre but widespread, and unemployment was practically unknown.

Then came the steam engine, the factory, the railroad, electric power, the telegraph and telephone. With the development of mechanical power and of cheap and speedy transportation and communication, the cities grew, attracting the youth from the farms. The steel plow, the seeder, the cultivator, the grain harvester, and increasing use of horse power released the youth from agriculture. Still later came the internal combustion engine, the automobile, and the tractor. The gasoline motor has now become so common that its influence is probably more pervasive, especially upon social ideals and institutions, than the steam engine.

The development of these inventions has increased agricultural production per worker, drawn youth out of the earlier rural cultures, and, augmented by city youth and immigrants from abroad, has built a marvelous and remarkably homogeneous urban civilization. These developments have tended to unify the Nation. They have made agriculture dominantly commercial and competitive, compelling changes in crop production or type of farming to be made with an alacrity unknown in self-sufficing agriculture. They have greatly altered the desires of people; and in association with scientific discoveries, have weakened the traditional foundations of religious faith. They have also weakened the family. A new culture has emerged, a modern urban culture, powerful, pervasive, permeating now into the remotest rural districts, materialistic, with a philosophy tending toward paganism.

The new urban culture is conquering, that is, the cultural traits of the new urban are supplanting those of the old rural culture. This is occurring partly because the urban culture is associated in the minds of youth with science, machinery, commerce, economic success, and so-called high standards of living. The schools and universities teach this urban culture, including the agricultural colleges. Recently I was told of a farmer in Indiana, a trustee of Purdue University, who remarked as his boy left for that institution, "I am full of fear that he will never want to come back to the farm." Every newspaper, every magazine teaches this urban culture, in the advertisements even more effectively than in the news items and editorials. Every automobile teaches it with its appeal to the love of power and of luxury. Every bill board, nearly every moving

picture, every dance hall teaches it. Most churches teach it--by example of the members more than by precept. Most economists, most sociologists teach it. Most people accept it because it provides jobs--or did prior to the depression; because it is the style, and because it appeals to the love of luxury and affords a relatively few people opportunity for personal recognition.

The Impending Decline of Urban Culture

This urban culture is conquering; but both vital and social statistics suggest that it is dying. Its materialistic philosophy seems to undermine the integrity of the family, and it is failing to provide for the reproduction of the race. The persistence of extensive unemployment and relief are also ominous. The more rapidly this urban culture spreads among the rural people, the more rapid will be the decline in the nation's population a few decades hence. In the large cities today 10 adults are raising only about 7 children (fig.1). Should the reproduction rate now remain stationary--it has been falling for more than a century--these 7 would raise 5 children, these 5 about $3\frac{1}{2}$. Births would fall to only about one-third the present number in a century, and population would decline in similar degree a few decades later, should there be no accessions from outside. In the farm population 10 adults are now raising about 14 children. Again assuming a stationary reproduction rate these 14 would have about 20 children, these 20 about 28. Births would almost treble in a century and population somewhat later, were there no migration from farms.

Now the birth rate doubtless will continue to decline, rural as well as urban, as this urban culture spreads among the people and becomes increasingly influential. Although the urban decline has been more rapid, let us assume that the rural decline will hereafter be at the same rate. On this assumption a thousand farm people would have 4 to 8 times as many descendants a century hence as 1000 people now living in large cities--4 times as many if half the farm youth migrate to the cities, as occurred during the decade before the depression, 8 times as many if all remain on farms. These appear to be the extremes. The farm people seem destined to contribute in the future an increasing proportion of the Nation's population. But unless the birth rate rises or many immigrants are admitted from abroad, the farm people can no longer prevent a decline eventually in the population of the Nation, which decline will accelerate with the passage of time. For not enough children are being born to maintain permanently the population of the nation.

The dying out of urban families is most rapid among the professional and business groups, among whom 10 adults are raising only 5 or 6 children. It is probable that the unskilled labor groups still have a birth rate almost sufficient to maintain their numbers (fig.2). There is some evidence also that a few families at the peak of the economic and social pyramid, families who have inherited wealth and need not economize in number of children, likewise a few business and professional men who have succeeded early in life, have almost as many children as the poor. In the farm population of the Corn Belt, the farmers in the richest counties have as large families as those in the poorest, indeed, in Iowa and Nebraska even larger families. This may be owing in part to the greater proportion of tenants in the richer counties. In the South there is, apparently, no great divergence between the prosperous and the poor of the farm population. It is the middle class in the cities that is rapidly extinguishing its stock, and must soon depend on other classes, mostly rural youth, for its maintenance. The Nation's leaders of the future seem likely to be supplied in increasing proportions by the large families of the richer agricultural regions and by the urban aristocracy who cherish family ideals.

But the Nation's laborers of the future will almost certainly come in increasing proportions from the rural areas of hilly, surface or poor soils, for here the birth rate and natural increase is highest. The Nation's citizens of the future will be in increasing proportions the descendents of the poor but proud people of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the croppers and tenants of the Cotton Belt, the hill folks that live along the Ohio River and its tributaries, the Russian-German sects of the Great Plains, the Mormons of Utah and Idaho, and other farming people who have been more or less isolated by their environment or by religious traditions from the influences of modern urban culture.

The significance of this situation to the churches in the cities is evident. To the Catholic Church, fully three-quarters of whose members are urban, and among whom the birth rate is relatively high, but declining, it portends eventual decline in numbers, unless that church reaches the half of the rural people who are, apparently, members of no church. To the Protestant churches, it also implies decline in membership unless the rural youth can be brought into the churches and those who migrate to the cities retained in the churches. For the crest of births was in 1921 and the number of youth will soon be declining in the cities (fig.3). Enrollment in the first grade of the public schools has been falling about 100,000 a year since 1930. In the six elementary grades it is declining about 200,000 a year. In some cities deaths in all ages already exceed births. The Protestant churches are fortunate in having a great hinterland of human resources in the rural regions, notably in the South.

The Drift of Rural Wealth to the Cities

But the increasing poverty of the rural people is rendering difficult the maintenance of rural churches. The cost to the farming people of feeding, clothing and educating the more than 6,000,000 farm people, mostly youth, who left the farms during the decade before the depression (1920-1929) and did not return, at least during that decade, may be estimated at approximately $12,000,000,000 ($100 a year until 5 years old and $150 a year from 5 to 15, or $2000 per migrant youth). Nor is this all: about one-sixth of the farm owner-operators died during this decade and a large proportion of their children--nearly one-half--had moved to towns and cities. The settlement of these estates apparently resulted in the transfer of about $2,000,000,000 more from the farming people.

Many times this settlement took the form of a mortgage. The amount of debt thus incurred cannot be separated from that arising from other causes, but the total interest paid on farm mortgage debt to non-farmers during the decade was about $5,000,000,000. Thirty years ago--before the World War--it was about $200,000,000 a year. Since the World War it has ranged from about $350,000,000 to $540,000,000 a year. And the rate of interest has been lower in recent years. Four hundred million dollars would put a bathroom and a modern kitchen into every farm house in the Nation in 5 or 6 years. It would build a new farm house for every young couple as they started farming. In some cases all the heirs to the farms had gone to town, or for other reasons the farm was rented. The payment of rent arising from all causes by farmers to non-farmers during the decade 1920-1929 has been estimated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics at $10,000,000,000.

There are, of course, return currents of wealth to the rural areas. Some of the money received as rent is paid as taxes by the landlords and spent on roads, schools, etc. Many farm people receive pensions from the government, and a few receive returns from non-farm investments. Money is spent by urban tourists in

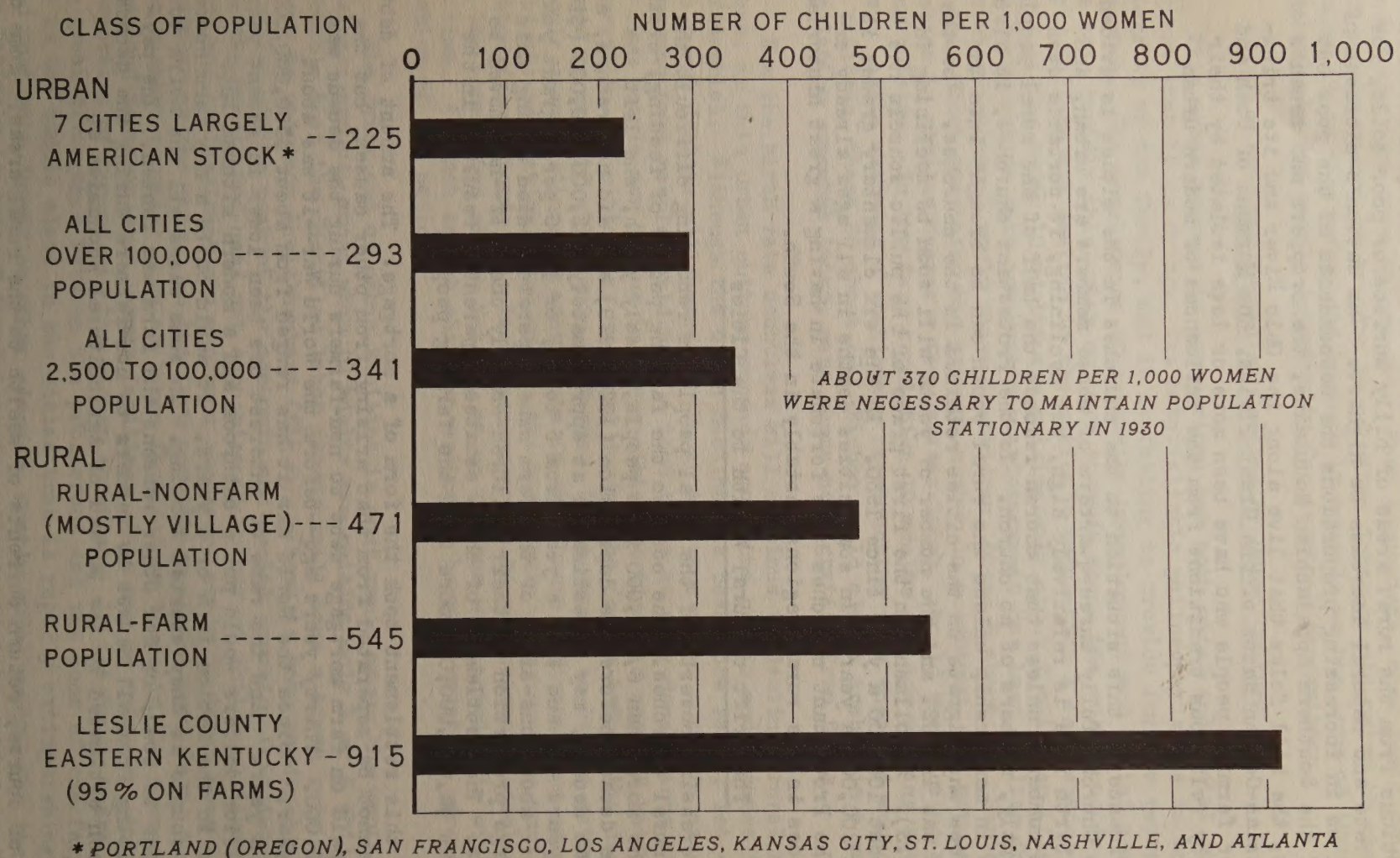
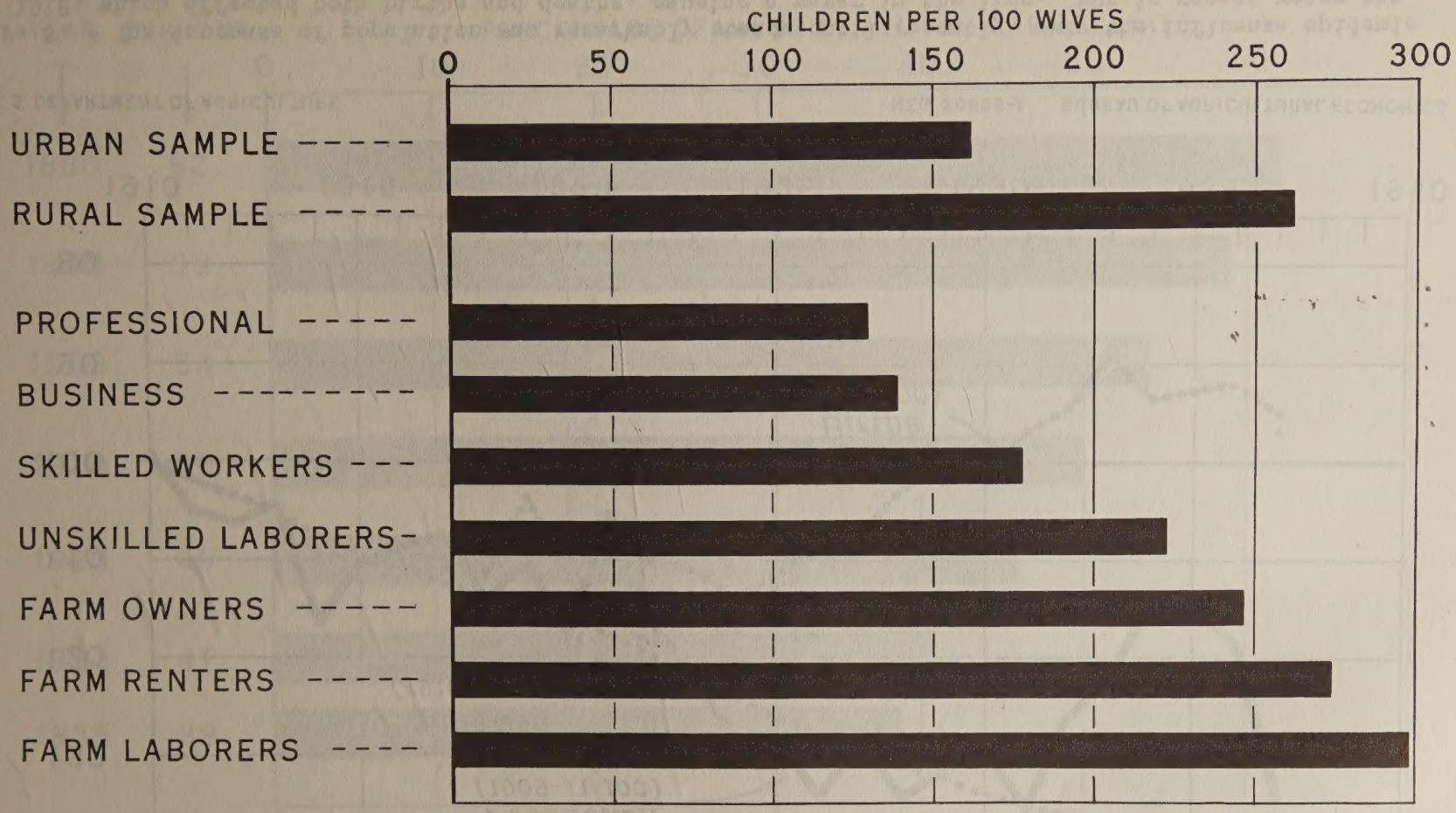

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE PER 1,000 WOMEN
15 TO 45 YEARS OF AGE IN UNITED STATES, APRIL 1, 1930
CLASS OF POPULATION
NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER 1,000 WOMEN
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1,000
URBAN
7 CITIES LARGELY AMERICAN STOCK* -- 225
ALL CITIES OVER 100,000 POPULATION ------ 293
ALL CITIES 2,500 TO 100,000 POPULATION ---- 341
ABOUT 370 CHILDREN PER 1,000 WOMEN WERE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN POPULATION STATIONARY IN 1930
RURAL
RURAL-NONFARM (MOSTLY VILLAGE) POPULATION --- 471
RURAL-FARM POPULATION ------- 545
LESLIE COUNTY EASTERN KENTUCKY (95% ON FARMS) - 915
* PORTLAND (OREGON), SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, KANSAS CITY, ST. LOUIS, NASHVILLE, AND ATLANTA
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEG. 25167
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Figure 1. - About 370 children under 5 years of age per 1,000 women 15 to 45 years of age (childbearing age) are required to maintain population stationary at the 1930 expectation of life in the United States of 61 years. In 1930 the seven cities largely of American stock, represented in the top bar of the graph, lacked, therefore, about 38 percent of having enough children to maintain their population permanently without accessions from outside, and all cities of over 100,000 population had a deficit of over 20 percent, whereas the smaller cities had a deficit of about 6 percent. On the other hand, the rural non-farm (mostly village and suburban) population had a surplus of 30 percent, and the farm pop-

CHILDREN BORN PER 100 WIVES, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION OF THE HUSBANDS, SELECTED COUNTIES, 1910*



*COMPILED FROM CENSUS OF 1910 BY MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND

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Figure 2. - In 1929 the Milbank Memorial Fund tabulated the returns from the 1910 census inquiry, "Mother of how many children: Number born ____" for 100,000 native white women classified by occupation of husband. The results were standardized for age of wife, duration of marriage, etc. Farm laborers averaged 9 percent more children born than tenants and these 12 percent more than owner operators. But farm owner operators averaged 11 percent more than unskilled laborers in the cities, while the unskilled averaged 25 percent more than the skilled, and these 27 percent more than businessmen.

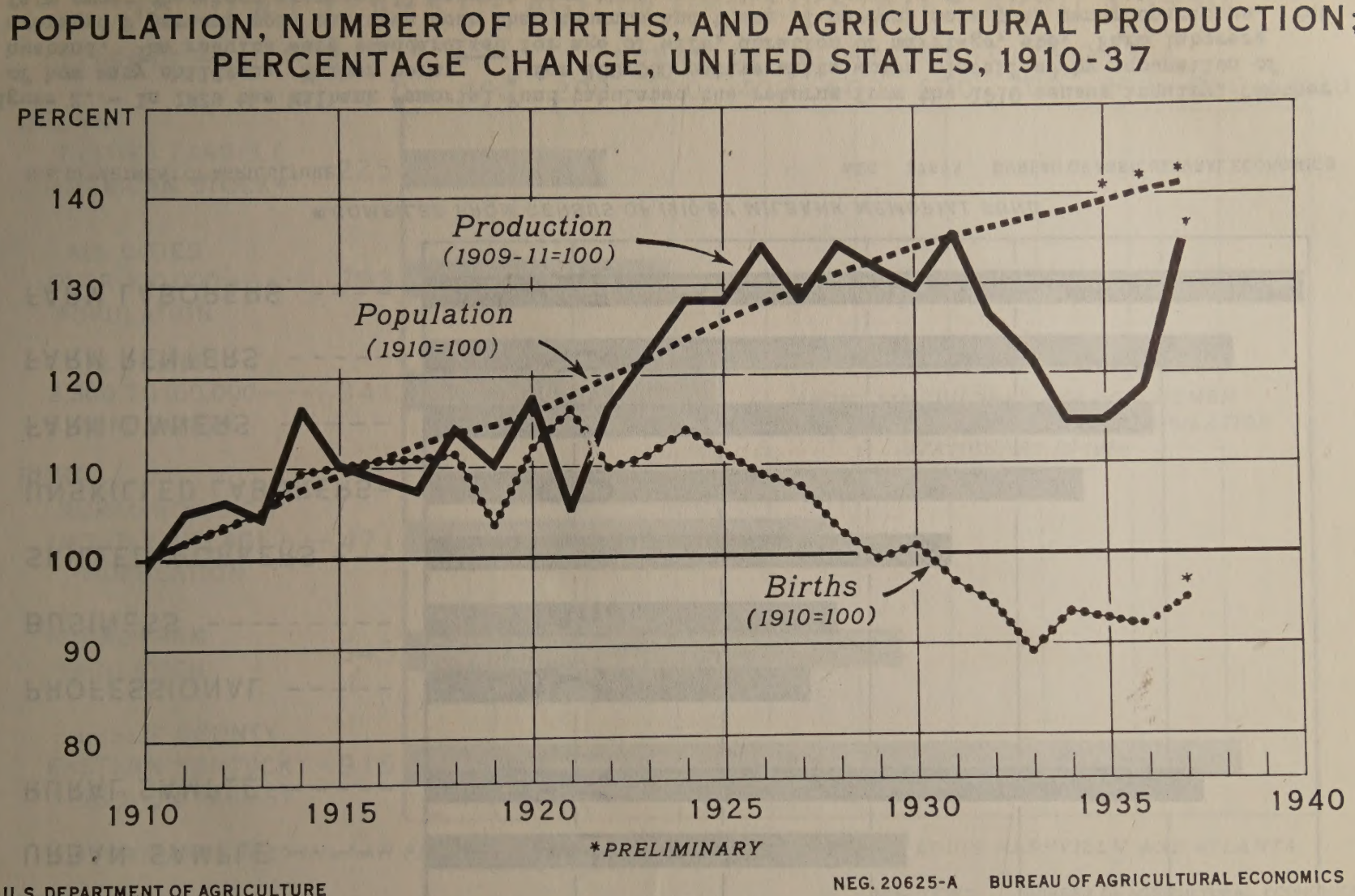

Figure 3. - The increase of population was remarkably steady until recently, only the influenza epidemic of 1918, which affected both births and deaths, causing a waver in the line. But in recent years the decline in births and the restrictions on immigration have caused a slowing down in the increase of population. Agricultural production, on the other hand, has fluctuated notably. From 1931 to 1935 the trend was downward, largely because of extraordinary drought, the agricultural-adjustment program, and soil erosion. But far more notable than the recent decline in agricultural production has been the 22 percent decline in births since 1924.

ESTIMATED EQUITY OF FARM OPERATORS IN FARM REAL ESTATE THEY OPERATED, 1880-1935

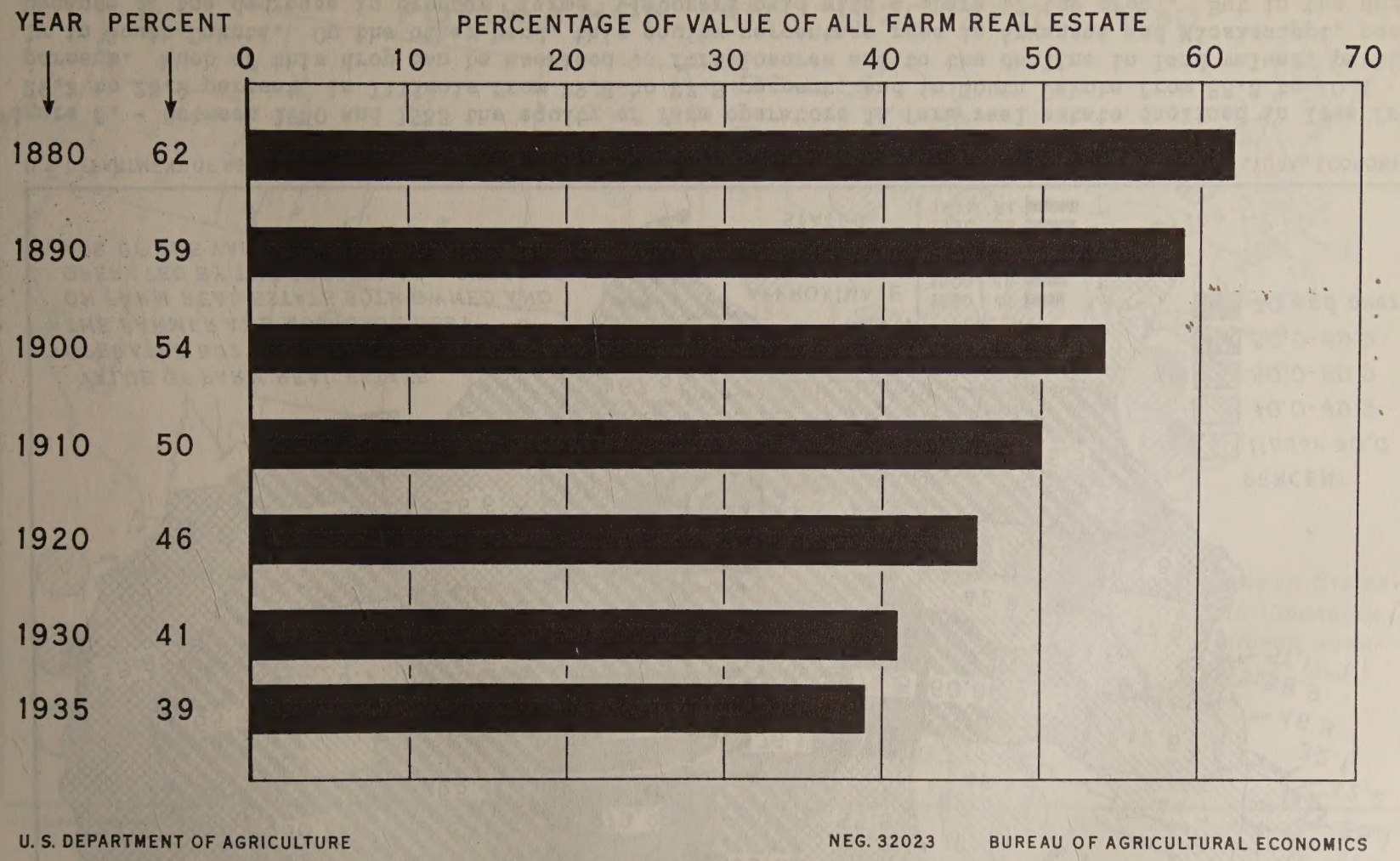

Figure 4. - In 1880 the equity of farm operators in farm real estate, that is the proportion remaining after the value of farms operated by tenants and the mortgage debt on farms operated by owners has been subtracted from the value of all farms, was over 62 percent. Each decade thereafter, in periods of prosperity as well as of depression, the percentage declined about 4 points, until in 1935 it was only 39 percent. An increasing proportion of farm operators has been sharing the income from the land with landlords or mortgage holders.

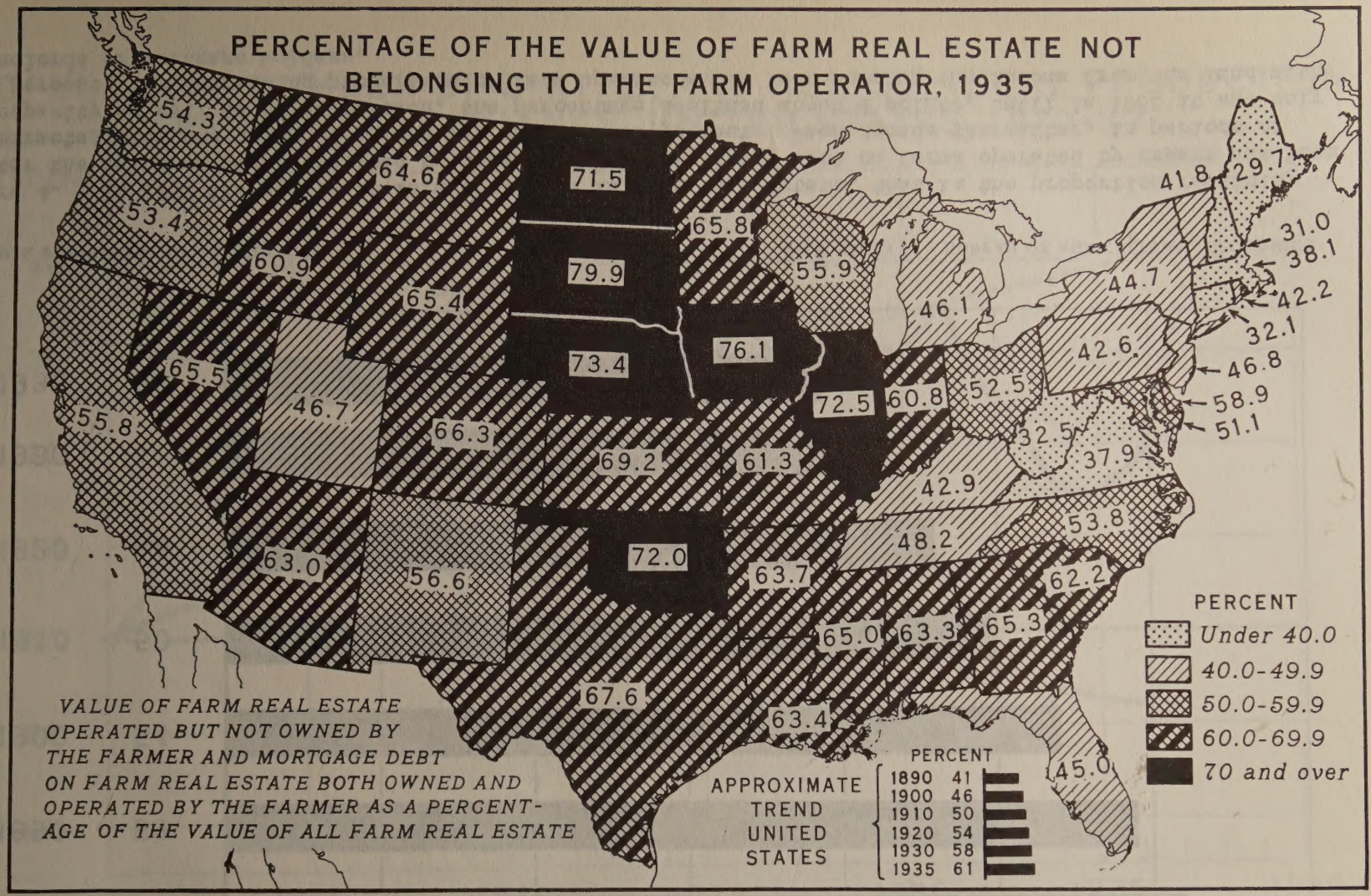

Figure 5. - Between 1930 and 1935 the equity of farm operators in farm real estate declined in Iowa from 29.2 to 23.9 percent, in Illinois from 29.3 to 27.5 percent, and in South Dakota from 28.3 to 20.1 percent. Much of this drop can be ascribed to foreclosures and to the decline in land values, particularly in South Dakota. On the other hand, this equity percentage rose in Arkansas and Mississippi, possibly because of the decrease in cropper "farms" (laborers paid with a share of the crop). But in the northeastern States, where the equity of farm operators had remained stationary or increased during most decades preceding 1930, the decline was generally notable between 1930 and 1935, owing principally to decline in farm values and in New England to increase in mortgage debt.

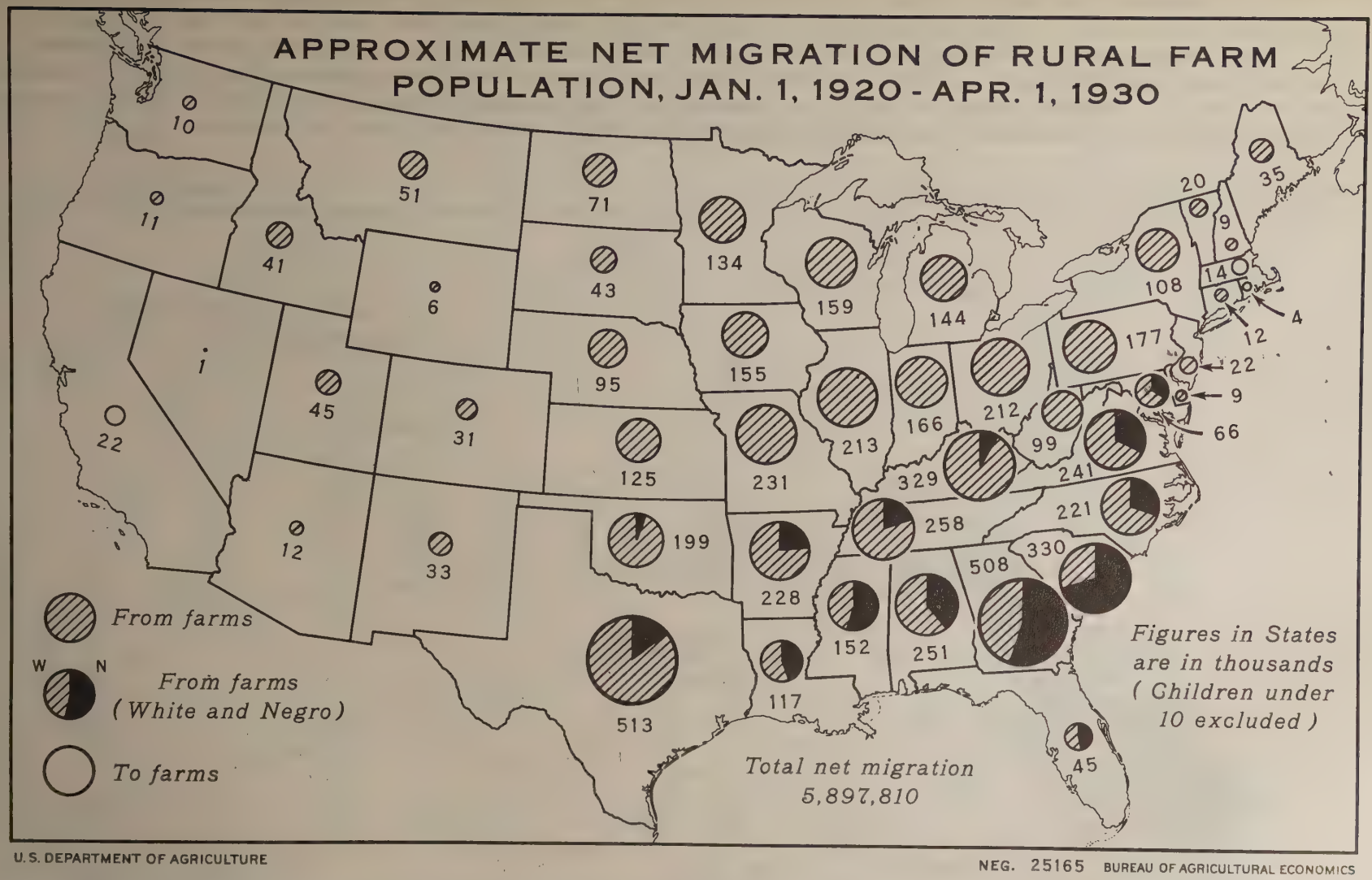

Figure 6. - About 60 percent of the 6,000,000 net migration from farms during 1920-29 was from the South. Most of these migrants were young people. The birth rate is high among Southern rural people, and economic opportunity was less than in the North. If it costs $2,000 to rear and educate a child to the age of 15 on farms in the South, these 3,800,000 migrants from Southern farms represent a contribution of $7,500,000,000 made during the decade by the farm population of the South to other parts of the Nation, mostly to the cities.

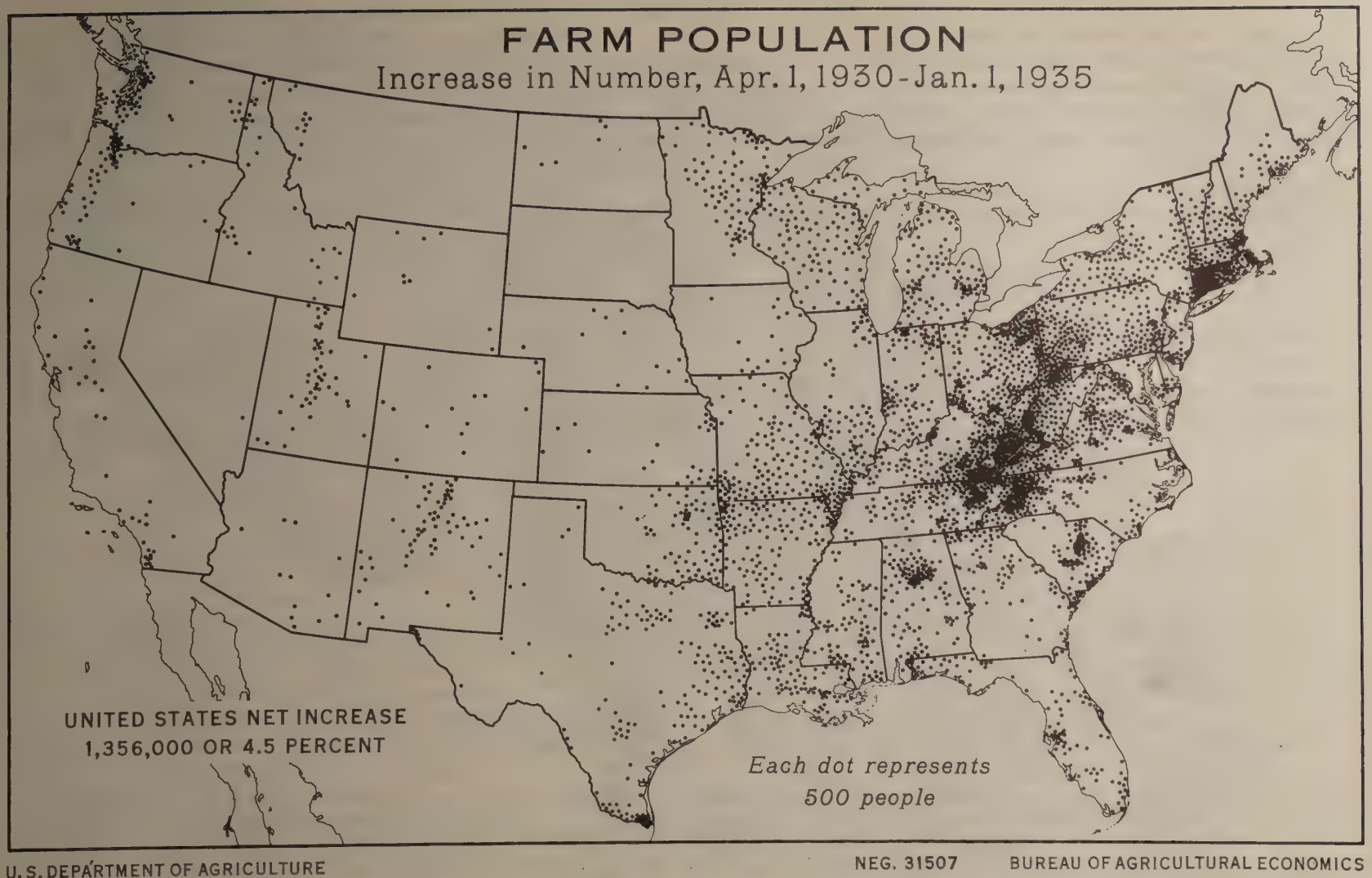

Figure 7. - The increase in farm population during the depression years was greatest in the Appalachian Mountain region, extending from New England to northeastern Ohio and northern Alabama. In this region migration from the farms had been heavy before the depression, and many of these migrants were forced by unemployment and lack of capital to return "home" early in the depression, to seek shelter and sustenance or to occupy some abandoned farm. In the Southern Appalachian region, where the birth rate is high, there was a "backing up" on the land, in addition to this back-to-the-land movement.

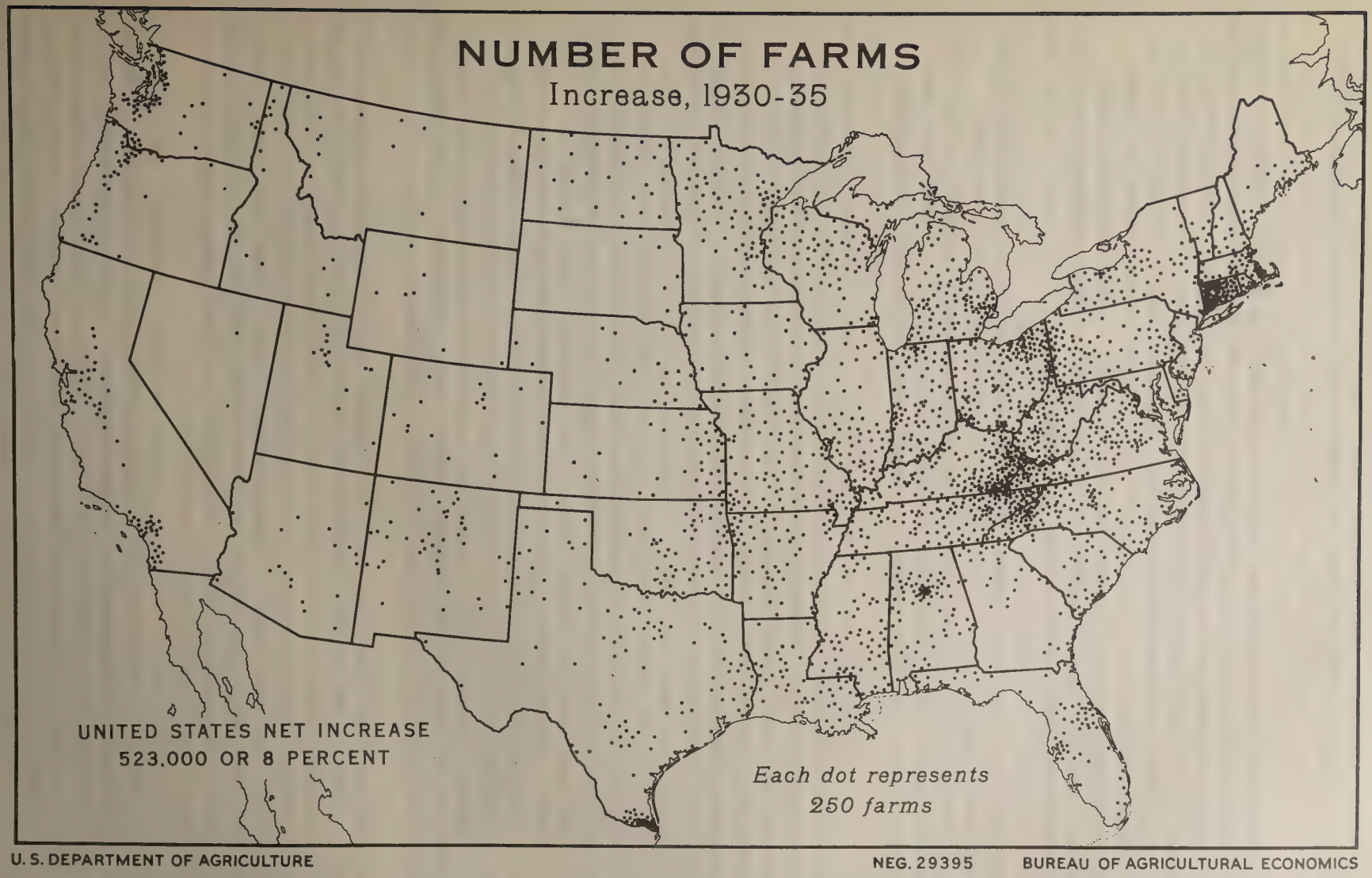

Figure 8. - The economic depression reversed many agricultural trends of previous years. Instead of a decline in number of farms, which had characterized most States since 1920 and some Northeastern States since 1880, there was a notable and wide-spread increase. This increase occurred largely in regions of poor soils or hilly surface, where the birth rate generally is high, and near the large cities, particularly those where the surrounding land is cheap. The location of this increase in farms suggests that most of these new farms are small part-time or self-sufficing farms.

rural territory, and some city people spend money on country estates. But these return currents certainly aggregate only a fraction of the flow from the farms to the cities.

With the population of the Nation rapidly approaching a stationary condition and probably the demand for farm products also, while agricultural technique continues to advance, the farmers should realize that outgo is as important as income. For example, 30 years ago, before the world war, the farmers of the Nation were selling two to three hundred million dollars worth of horses and mules a year to non-farm people. In recent years this large income had been changed to the enormous expense of one billion dollars a year paid non-farm people for power. In addition, a half billion dollars is the estimated cost of the use of the automobile by farm people for pleasure.

It is true that, unlike the losses incident to migration of youth from the farms, these expenditures for power and pleasure may yield a full return. Nevertheless, it should be realized that the income to agriculture is no greater now than a quarter century ago, measured in purchasing power. These vast expenditures involve lesser expenditures for other items or loss of the ownership of wealth.

The drift of rural wealth to the cities is reflected in the increase of tenancy and of mortgage debt. Combining the value of farm real estate operated by tenants with the amount of mortgage debt on farm real estate operated by owners and subtracting these two items from the total value of farm real estate, there remains what may be called the equity of farm operators in farm real estate. This equity in the Nation as a whole constituted about 62 percent in 1880, 59 percent in 1890, 54 percent in 1900, 50 percent in 1910, 46 percent in 1920, 41 percent in 1930, and 39 percent in 1935 (fig.4). In years of prosperity as well as of depression the farmers have steadily been losing the ownership of the land. The decline in equity has been most rapid in the most commercialized areas, notably the Corn Belt and Wheat Belt. In Iowa and South Dakota in 1935, farm operators owned above mortgage debt less than one-fourth of the farm real estate (fig.5). The equity of mortgaged owner-operators of Iowa in their farms averaged about $10,500 in 1910, $25,300 in 1920, $10,100 in 1930, about $4,000 in 1935. The equity, if such it may be called, of the banks and insurance companies, the Farm Credit Administration and other credit agencies in the farm real estate of Iowa is about equal to that of the farm operators.

Where the land is rich and the farms are large, as is the case in many parts of the Corn Belt, tenants and heavily mortgaged owners can still obtain an income sufficient to maintain a comfortable living and to support a church. But where the land is poor or the farms are small, as in much of the South, this becomes difficult. It is in these regions of poor soil and small farms that the birth rate is highest and the migration to the cities during periods of prosperity has been greatest. About 60 percent of the net migration from farms during the decade 1920-1929 was from the Southern States (fig.6).

During the economic depression this migration was greatly reduced, in fact in the southern Appalachian Mountains a large increase in farm population occurred, as unemployed migrants returned from the cities seeking shelter and sustenance with relatives and friends and the farm youth were backed up on farms (fig.7). The poor people in the mountains shared with the Government the burden of relief during the depression. In many counties the increase in number of farms exceeded 40 per cent (fig.8), and in some counties 40 per cent of all families are still on relief.

Millions of people are on relief also in the cities. The expenditure for relief in August 1938 was higher than in any preceding month. In New York State in 1910 the expenditure for "outdoor" (non-institutional) relief averaged 10 cents per capita of the entire population of the State. In 1920 it was 41 cents, in 1930 it was $1.41, and in 1934 it was $16.51. This is a load of over $60 per family. When I consider the magnitude of the relief load that would fall on New York City, and on practically all other cities of the Nation, were the government funds for relief withdrawn, I am led to doubt if the rural churches can expect much succor from the city churches, except in periods of prosperity.

Even were such succor available I doubt if its acceptance is desirable. What the rural people need is not charity but economic justice and a greater flow back to the farms of government aid to the schools, in medical service, etc. This is especially needed in the South, where the excess of births over deaths is about equal to that in all the rest of the Nation.

The Building of a New "Rurban" (Rural-Urban) Civilization

We must recognize that modern urban civilization is failing to reproduce the race, is failing to maintain the integrity of the family, is failing to provide economic security for a large proportion of the people, is failing to provide probably one-third of the city people with the foods essential to health and efficiency, and is draining away from the rural people a large share of their income, inducing depletion of capital in land and buildings. It is also attracting the ambitious and educated rural youth to the cities, thereby depleting the leadership and probably impairing the genetic quality of the rural people, upon whom the Nation is increasingly dependent for its future citizens.

These conditions are inducing an expansion in our ideas as to the functions of government, and bid fair to alter profoundly the economic system. A new civilization is arising whose form is yet embryonic.

Relative to the residence of the people, an increasing proportion seem very likely to live in suburbs, often on part-time farms, and a few on country estates. Many in the urban aristocracy and in the middle class are seeking to preserve the family line and achieve a sense of economic security by moving onto the land. Apparently they are beginning to realize that the land is the foundation of the family. May they also realize that the family is the foundation of the State.

Relative to social conditions, it appears that society is stratifying. The business and professional groups and the farmers who can afford to give their children a college education are producing the business and professional groups of tomorrow. Those farm families who are losing the ownership of the land are probably, in most cases, losing it forever. Their children are likely to become farm tenants and laborers, office workers, and semi-skilled and unskilled laborers in the cities, perhaps in perpetuity.

In this connection the philosophy of life of the Amish people is of interest. Recently I spent several days in hilly Tuscarawas County, Ohio, visiting among others an Amish "bishop." He lived in a large white house, simply furnished mostly with excellent home made furniture, and ample in size to accommodate on the occasional Sunday the congregation of 400 people. These people have no church building, but meet at the houses of members. Nearly all clothing is made at home from purchased cloth. Some weaving is still done. Practically all the food is produced on the farm. Their religion forbids the use of automobiles, little light buggies being used instead for local travel. Tractors also are forbidden

by most bishops, and regulations are enforced by excommunication, if necessary.

The families among these Amish apparently average about seven children. The Bishop I met had twelve, of whom five were married and living on farms they owned. Two of these farms were mortgaged, but to Amish creditors. The bishop remarked that in his youth there were six districts of Amish in the area, and that now there were twenty-four. The districts averaged, he believed, fully as many members as in his youth. Apparently these people have increased about fourfold in a half century. The children are not encouraged to go beyond the elementary schools, and are encouraged to remain in agriculture by the gift of a farm. Very few, I was told, leave the farms.

Among the conservative Mennonites who are gradually selling their farms to the Amish, the children are encouraged to go to high school, and among the liberal Mennonites a few are sent to college. The highly educated pastor of one of these liberal churches in a nearby village told me he had remaining only twelve farm families, and probably in the next generation there would be only three farm families, the children going to high school and college and then to town.

These Amish people have a philosophy which results in survival and in the expanding occupation and ownership of the land, while the Mennonites, to the extent that they are educated, tend to lose the land, go to the cities, and the families to die out. Should education tend toward extinction?

Property is Power

Whether the rural people, in association probably with the urban and the suburban well-to-do, will be able to lead the Nation toward a more stable and permanent civilization depends primarily, in my opinion, upon whether they can retain the "native values of rural life," in large measure associated with Christian teaching, and recover the ownership of the land. Property confers not only liberty upon the possessor--it gives also power. Shall the Nation's farmers become tenants and laborers with the owners of the land living in the cities, as is the case in most plantation areas of the South? Or shall the system of family farms owned by the operators be preserved? The answer to this question also lies, in large part, in my opinion, in the hands of the leaders of agriculture in the Nation, especially in the rural churches and in the colleges of agriculture, including the extension services. Whether these leaders and agencies exert a directing influence will depend largely upon their economic and social philosophy.

To recover and retain the ownership of the land will require, in my opinion, that the farm people turn their faces from the over-commercialized urban capitalistic system, so far as they can, with its tendency toward exploitation and speculation, its emphasis on present gain and its discount of the future at 4 to 6 percent, and, instead, turn toward a less commercial system. In the South, for example, the "live at home" program appears essential not only to the payment of debts by farmers but also even to an adequate diet. The high degree of independence must extend beyond the food supply. I am deeply interested in the development of credit unions and of producer's and consumer's cooperation in Eastern Nova Scotia arising out of the study clubs organized by Father Coady and Father Tompkins of Saint Francis Xavier University, and their Protestant allies. Here are a people as poor, apparently, as most farm people in our South, who are solving their economic problems and recovering their courage and sense of dignity.

It is my conviction that such dependence upon the cities for credit as exists

at present, and also for standards of living, styles of behavior, attitudes and ideals, is a dangerous thing for the farming people. In general, to the extent that they accept the urban culture, their families will tend to die out. Meanwhile, they will continue to lose the ownership of the land. If farmers must borrow to buy land, it would seem wise for them to give preference to the governmental-cooperative system, i.e., the Federal Land Bank, with its low interest rate and amortization plan that avoids the entire debt becoming due in the midst of a depression; or, better, if local credit is available on equal terms, borrow from such lenders and keep the interest and eventual principal payments in the community. At 6 percent, the interest payments alone on a farm mortgaged for 50 percent of its value would buy the entire farm in a third of a century. Although interest payments have totaled twice the face value of the mortgage, it remains undiminished.

If the farming people are to recover and retain the ownership of the land, they must become masters of their own fates financially, captains of their own souls culturally. They must do this soon, judging from the trends, or they will lose the opportunity. For society is stratifying, and a vast proletariat (propertyless people) is arising, even in the rural areas.

Reviving the Rural Voluntary Institutions

The great institutions in rural America are the family, the church, the school, the farm organizations, the fraternal orders, and the agricultural extension service. The school and the extension service, both maintained by the State, are expanding their functions to meet urgent needs, while in the opinion of many the family, the church and the fraternal orders are not functioning as fully as in the past, though the need of their services is, apparently, greater than ever. Now the voluntary institutions are associated with the spirit of freedom and sense of responsibility. Freedom is associated with democratic government and has promoted the progress of science. Sense of responsibility is associated with the accumulation of wealth and has also promoted the progress of science.

There is a wide-spread trend in the occidental world toward seeking the solution of deep-seated difficulties in economic devices administered by the State. These can help to correct injustices, and in emergencies they may be imperative, but the major causes of our present distress lie beyond the reach of such measures, in my opinion. Economic reorganization cannot alone solve the profound problems of rural life and national welfare, much less can political reorganization do so. Though such reorganization can produce more favorable conditions for the solution of these problems, no mechanistic devices, no governmental machinery can solve these problems. The need, the essential, as I sense it, is a vitalizing spirit, arising from the acceptance of worthy ideals--a nationalistic or humanitarian conviction partaking of religious fervor. We must subordinate the temporal values now characteristic of urban life, and accept as our guide the more permanent values of rural life.

What are these rural values? First, the family ideal, which includes the reproduction of the race, the education of the child, and the transmission of wealth and culture from generation to generation.

Second, a recognition of the divine in man, of the worth of the human soul; or, as expressed in part by Jefferson, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The concept of the infinite worth of the human soul is a priceless contribution of Christianity to the progress of civilization. In my opinion it laid the foundation for the growth of freedom, democracy, and science.

Third, patriotism, loyalty to the State. Without peace, the protection of life and property, and the many functions of the State in promoting the public welfare, most of the things we cherish could not exist and life itself would become precarious.

Fourth, an emphasis on the dignity of labor, and its function not only in the production of commodities but also in the development of personality. This also is a doctrine of the Christian Church.

Fifth, a realization of the necessity of sacrifice, particularly of the present for the sake of the future, by parents for the sake of children, and by citizens for the State. Such sacrifice is basic not only to the reproduction of the race, but also to the accumulation of wealth and the conservation of natural and human resources.

Sixth, a comprehension of the importance from the economic, social and political standpoints of the widespread distribution of the ownership of property, particularly of the land.

The Responsibility of the Christian Church

The past year, with its developments in Europe and the Orient, has brought to me a fuller recognition of the contribution of Christianity to occidental civilization. Unemployment plus war has revived paganism in militant form. Paganism also recognizes the basic importance of the family, emphasizes loyalty to the State, also the dignity of labor and the necessity of sacrifice, but it, apparently, denies the divine in man.

I conclude that the church--Catholic, Protestant, and Hebrew-- has a great role to play in rural as well as urban life. Indeed, the Nation's destiny depends, in my opinion, upon whether it rises to the emergency and teaches the values associated with the family and rural life. The Nation has undervalued agriculture and overvalued industrialism and commercialism.

I hope the rural pastors can work with the agricultural extension services and other agencies in developing among the rural people a revival of rural ideals relative to the family, the worth of the human soul, patriotism, the dignity of labor, the necessity of sacrifice, and the widespread distribution of the ownership of property. These ideals are now of deeper significance than bigger crops, or better livestock, or prices of farm products, or standards of living, important as these material things undoubtedly are. For social ideals are essential to the survival of the people and of the partially Christianized civilization that has developed during the centuries.

Authority in Rural Life

The farmers have accepted science. Under the leadership of the county agricultural agent they have demonstrated on their farms the validity of the recommendations made by the agricultural experiment stations relative to methods of crop production and the care of livestock, particularly genetics, nutrition, sanitation, and the control of disease. In these fields the county agent speaks with authority. In matters of farm management the authority is less complete, but where much research has been done the farmers are accepting also the recommendations of the county agent in this phase of economics.

Likewise in the home demonstration work, the teachings of science are

accepted by farm women in relation to nutrition and sanitation. The home demonstration agent speaks with less authority relative to clothing, house furnishings and other matters that depend in large measure on changing styles.

But in national economics and in social organization, in which the need of guidance is urgent, can the county agent or home demonstration agent speak with authority? Few of them have been trained in these fields of science, in part because the research workers have had, as yet, few positive and generally accepted principles to offer.

But decisions are being made daily in these fields of human activity, and must continue to be made. Until social science has developed more fully, can we consider the testimony of history and of personal experience? These testimonies indicate, I believe, the basic importance to the survival of a free people of the six rural values: the family ideal, the worth of the human soul, patriotism, the dignity of labor, the necessity of sacrifice, and the widespread distribution of the ownership of property.